

ALMA RECORD.

C. M. FLEMING Editor and Dr.

ALMA, MICH.

NOTES OF THE DAY.

THE DECEMBER CENTURY will contain two or three papers of general interest relating to the war, viz., 1. A description by Captain John Ericsson of the construction and work of the monitors, illustrated strikingly by pictures of these vessels in action. 2. "The Loss of the Monitor," a graphic description by a survivor, Francis D. Butts and 3. "The Private History of a Campaign that Failed," by Mark Twain, being his personal experience (and not altogether an untypical one) of war in Missouri in 1861, with war-maps by the author, and illustrations by Kemble. In the January number, will appear a fully illustrated paper by Gen. John Pope on his campaign against Lee in North Virginia. The confederate side will be described by Gen. Longstreet. In the February number, where Gen. Grant's fourth paper will probably appear.

On Sept. 4 Commissioner Black of the pension office made a ruling refusing to allow applications for pension increases where the records of the war department showed that the applicant was a deserter. The commissioner has furnished an explanation of the intent of the ruling. He says the ruling was in strict accordance with the law and only seeks to confine the work of adjudication to those claims whose beneficiaries have clean records. So far, however, from operating as a stumbling block it will tend to expedite business as the adjutant general has shown his willingness to remove from his records all charges of desertion which have been found to be merely technical and in several instances this has been done immediately on a proper presentation of the case by the pension office.

The will of Louis David Riel, made in Regina jail Nov. 6, has been given out. It is long, rambling document and consists mainly of expressions of faith in the catholic church and supplications for the forgiveness of all whom he has wronged or offended. He "pardons" all who have "persecuted" him, not omitting those who sentenced him to death. No mention is made of any property. He closed with an admonition to his wife to bring their children up in a Christian manner and says "he leaves them neither gold or silver," but trusts that God inspires the truly paternal blessing which he gives them.

SENATOR VANWYCK of Nebraska, says he will introduce at the coming session of congress a bill to raise the pension of soldiers and widows to \$12 per month. They are now receiving \$8. He will also push his bill to pension all honorably discharged union soldiers who are dependent upon daily wages and who are not now on the pension rolls. He will also push his bill to compel all land grant railroads to pay taxes on their lands immediately upon confirmation of their grants. At present they only pay taxes upon lands as rapidly as it is patented to them.

STATISTICS presented to the national butter, cheese and egg association, which recently assembled in Chicago, show that in 1884 there was over \$700,000,000 invested in milk cows in the country. The tremendousness of the figures is better made apparent by comparison with the united banking capital of the country, which is nearly \$42,000,000 less than this showing.

The amount of money which changes hands owing to speculation is almost incalculable in amount. Washington Gladden states that on Wall street alone the amount of wealth transferred in the questionable operations there in one year aggregates \$700,000,000. It is a query worthy of reflection whether our growing labor troubles do not spring from seed sown just here.

An improvement has been made on the Bessemer steel process at the Edgar Thompson steel works in Pittsburgh, which it is said, will have the effect of making Bessemer steel equal in quality to crucible steel about one-tenth the price. Bessemer steel can be produced at a cost of a cent and a half a pound, while that made in crucibles costs at least 11 cents a pound.

VESUVIUS must be a very accomodating volcano. Regularly at the beginning of every winter, when the proprietors of Naples hostilities are desirous of attracting travelers from America and from the north of Europe in that direction, Vesuvius begins to belch forth lava—at least, reports of a spectacular performance by the old volcano are spread over the world.

Lyman Abbott, writing in *The Century* for November of "Danger Ahead" in our social and commercial relations, utters his thought sententiously when he says: Politically, America is a democracy; industrially, America is an aristocracy." He hints that unless capital voluntarily makes some concessions, it will presently suffer per force, lamentation.

THE president is said to wish to avoid any conflict with the senate over the confirmation of appointments and wants senators who have unimpeachable facts to present to relate them to him at once and he will rectify the mistakes, if such there have been.

WHEN buttering gains recognition at a butter show and gets a place beside the pure stuff, as it did at Chicago, it is high time for cows to kick.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All communications for this paper will be accepted by the name of the writer, and not by that of the publisher or editor. Write only on one side of the paper, and use ink. Address your correspondence to the editor, and state the date when you send it, to have the letters and figures plain and distinct. Do not use initials, and do not put your name on the envelope. If you do, we will not be responsible for the carelessness in which they are handled.

THE STATE AT LARGE.

Railroad Commissioners' Report.

From the annual report of the State Commissioner of Railroads for 1885, just issued, it appears that the depression that has so affected the general business of the country has retarded proposed railroad enterprises in this state, and that \$1,000,000,000 were added to the total value during the year. The total funded and floating debt of railroads operating in the state at the close of the year was \$45,787,700, an increase over the preceding year of \$17,350,674 or 5.61 per cent. The total traffic in 1885 was \$1,000,000,000, a decrease of 10.8 per cent. The interest upon the debts of roads reporting to the commissioners is \$165,172,000, a sum for the year 1884 figure at the sum of \$81,636,000, of which \$21,018,864.43 was for passengers and \$80,683,335 for freight. The entire operating expenses, including taxes, were \$1,000,000,000, a decrease of \$135,507,700, the expenses being 10.8 per cent. of the earnings. 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